

**Standard 4-3** The student will demonstrate an understanding of the conflict between the American colonies and England.

**4-3.3:** Explain the major ideas and philosophies of government reflected in The Declaration of Independence.

**Taxonomy Level:** B 2 Understand / Conceptual Knowledge

**Previous /Future Knowledge:**

In 3rd grade, students studied the Declaration of Independence and its relationship to South Carolina (3-3.1).

In United States History, students will study the impact of the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution on colonies and the world (USHC-2.2).

**It is essential for students to know:**

There are four **major ideas** that were **reflected in the Declaration of Independence**. Thomas Jefferson said it best:

- *“All men are created equal.”*: Although Jefferson did not recognize the rights of African Americans or women and all men were not treated equally, this phrase is the fundamental principle of American government.
- *“...they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”*: Rights are not given to men by their government but are inherent and undeniable.
- *“to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed”*: The purpose of government is to protect the rights of the people.
- *“whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it”*: If the government does not protect the rights of the people, it is the right of the people to change their government.

The *Declaration of Independence* also includes a list of grievances against King George III in order to prove that the rights of the people had been violated and therefore the people had the right to abolish their old government and form a new one. The *Declaration* concludes with a formal statement declaring the colonists' independence from England.

**It is not essential for students to know:**

It is not essential for students to focus on how the Declaration of Independence affected other countries or to memorize it. Students do not need to know the names of all of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

**Assessment guidelines:**

Appropriate assessments would require students to **explain** the major ideas of the *Declaration of Independence* and to **summarize** the philosophies of government that are reflected in the document.